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# OPEN SESAME!

Your guide to CM/ECF

USBC District of Maryland August 12, 2003

## What Is Your ECF **Fear** factor?

### ECF Participation Growing

We are very excited about the volume of pleadings being filed electronically since our conversion in April. The percentage of new cases filed electronically has risen from 2.4% in April to 24.8% in July and the percentage of pleadings filed electronically has grown from 7.2% to 19.7% in the district.

During the months of March through July 2003 the court's trainers trained a total of 594 attorneys and 384 non-attorneys. We've also received many requests for training waivers from attorneys already using ECF in other bankruptcy courts.

### What Is Your Fear Factor?

Attorneys who are using the system to file electronically are doing a great job! However, some of you are not using your logins to file electronically and a few of you have not registered for training (we know who you are). We hope you recognize how electronic filing can benefit you and are aware of our willingness to provide support via the telephone or email.

If you are concerned that you don't have the right equipment, rest assured all you need is a personal computer with an Internet connection, word processing software and software

to convert documents to pdf format, such as Adobe Acrobat Writer. Obviously, fear does not need to be a factor for you.

### Your First Challenge

Unlike the stunts on the television show Fear Factor, our challenges can be performed safely by you at home. First, complete a training registration form, which can be found on our website via the Electronic Filing hyperlink. Send the completed form to the court and wait for the trainers to contact you to schedule a class. Classes are three hours long and jam-packed with helpful information.

### Your Second Challenge

If you survived the first challenge, next you need to attend class and receive your login and password. Don't worry, we won't make you eat anything gross.

### The Final Round!

If you're still in the game at this point, it's all downhill from here. Once you have a login and password, you can file pleadings anywhere you have internet access. Prepare your pleadings as you normally would, convert them to pdf, go to the court's website to login and file.

**There are no losers here!**

### Local Rules

Proposed changes to the Local Bankruptcy Rules are now available on our website for review and comment by the Bar. Visit [www.mdb.uscourts.gov](http://www.mdb.uscourts.gov) and click on the link under Court News. Comments may be e-mailed to [lbr\\_comments@mdb.uscourts.gov](mailto:lbr_comments@mdb.uscourts.gov). Comments are due by August 29, 2003.

### ECF Training in Harford County

The Harford County Community College is offering an evening ECF training class, "Electronic Filing and Bankruptcy". The session, sponsored by the Harford County Bar Association and taught by court trainers, will be held on September 16, 2003, 6:30-9:30 PM. Tuition for the course is \$28 and attendees will receive a login and password for electronic filing with the court. For more information, call the HCCC Continuing Education Office at 410-836-4376 or visit them on-line at [www.harford.edu](http://www.harford.edu).

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Is it acceptable if one of my associates files my pleading with their login?** No, this is not an acceptable practice. Remember, your login is equivalent to your signature on pleadings. The court will consider the pleading filed by the attorney whose login was used, not the attorney whose name is on the /S/ signature line. If the login name and the name on the signature line do not match, the court may question the authenticity of the pleading.

**I've changed my email address in ECF but I'm still receiving notices of electronic filing at my old address - why?** You've discovered a "bug" in ECF. If you are changing your

email address but do not make any changes to the personal information in your ECF account, you will not be asked whether you want to update all of your cases and ECF will only make the address change for filings in future cases. In order to update all of your cases, from the Utilities menu, select Maintain Your ECF Account. Then make a minor change to your personal information, such as removing the period after your middle initial or changing Street to St. Also update your email address. The change to your personal information prompts the ECF system to ask whether you want to update all of your cases. We're hoping this bug will be fixed in the system upgrade due out in September 2003.

**I'm still not sure how to upload my proposed orders.** There are two scenarios. First, a proposed order *accompanying a request for relief*, or motion, is filed only as a pdf attachment to the motion. Proposed orders are not entered on the docket unless signed by a judge, therefore they do not warrant separate docket entries. For complete instructions, refer to Attachments to Documents on page 79 of the Attorney/Trustee Manual located online.

Second, a proposed order submitted *other than with a pleading*, such as a consent order or an order embodying a ruling, is uploaded directly into E-Orders, the court's order management system (refer to Uploading Proposed Orders on page 59 of the manual).

The Attorney/Trustee Manual contains step-by-step instructions on numerous topics. From [www.mdb.uscourts.gov](http://www.mdb.uscourts.gov), click on the Electronic Filing link on the left, then click on the Attorney/Trustee Manual (right column).



# OPEN SESAME!

Your guide to CM/ECF

USBC District of Maryland March 26, 2003

## ORDER in the Court!



## Order Processing Becomes Electronic

### E-Orders

E-Orders is the order processing component of the CM/ECF Program which provides an electronic means for submission, routing, review, and disposition of orders.

### Attorneys and E-Orders

When attorneys electronically file a motion or response, the related proposed order will be included as a pdf attachment to the motion/response. This provides other parties with an electronic copy of the order for review via the docket report. The case administrator uploads a copy of the proposed order into the E-Orders program.

If advised by the judge in court to submit a proposed order, the attorney will use the E-Orders program to directly submit the order. Choose Order Upload from either the Bankruptcy or Adversary menus, select Upload Single, enter the case number and the document number of the related pleading at the prompts and attach the pdf copy of the proposed order.

### Proposed Orders on Paper

Proposed orders that have been filed on paper or submitted via diskette will be uploaded into E-Orders by case administrators.

### Proposed Order Format

All proposed orders submitted on or after April 7, 2003 must conform to the following specifications, whether submitted electronically or in paper:

- The top margin on the first page must be no less than three (3) inches.
- The last line in the proposed order must state, in bold, **‘End of Order,’** and be centered in the middle of the line to indicate the end of the order.
- The judge’s signature line must be omitted. The judge will electronically sign the order in the blank space provided by the three inch top margin on the first page.
- Multi-page orders must contain page numbers at the bottom of each page.
- The fonts used with Adobe Acrobat Writer version 3 or 4 must be Courier, Helvetica, or Times New Roman (regular, bold, italic, and bold italic). The fonts used with version 5 must be Arial, Courier, or Times New Roman (regular, bold, italic, and bold italic). Other fonts will not process correctly through the court’s noticing center.

### Trustees and E-Orders

Trustees will also have access to E-Orders. In fact, by choosing Upload Batch, chapter 13 trustees will be able to upload proposed orders in batches. In the near future, the court will explore providing this capability to chapter 7 panel trustees as well.

### Training

Training on submitting proposed orders will be included in the CM/ECF training classes. Detailed instructions will also be available in the Attorney Training Manual, located on our website, [www.mdb.uscourts.gov](http://www.mdb.uscourts.gov).

### The Case Administrator's Role

Case administrators are responsible for downloading each proposed order submitted as an attachment, saving a copy and then uploading it into E-Orders. Once uploaded, the proposed order is automatically routed to the appropriate case administration team's electronic folder based on the case number of the pleading. Case administrators can review and monitor pending proposed orders by their assigned terminal digits, but also have access to orders ending in other terminal digits for coverage purposes.



### Avoid These Dates

On April 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> the Court will be converting all current case data to CM/ECF. We need your help. When possible, please avoid filing pleadings on April 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>. All pleadings filed will be accepted and considered filed but will not appear on the docket until April 7<sup>th</sup>. Procedures for processing emergency pleadings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of April will not change.

Case administrators will electronically route proposed orders to chambers when response deadlines have passed, or as otherwise appropriate. The associated pleading and related pleadings are easily accessed along with the order, and the case administrator can provide additional information to chambers via an electronic note attached to the order.

The program allows proposed orders to be replaced by an attorney as directed at a hearing or by the court if a new order is needed.

### Judges and E-Orders

The judges and their support staff (law clerks, judicial assistants and courtroom deputies) will review proposed orders and associated matters, edit or interlineate orders as necessary and route them for further review and/or action (for example: setting hearings). The E-Orders program enables the judge to affix his electronic signature, along with the order disposition (granting, denying, etc.), to orders in batch without handling any paper.

### Entry of Signed Orders

Case administrators retrieve signed orders from the program for docketing and noticing. The signed order is directly attached to the CM/ECF entry when the order is docketed. This allows parties to view the order.

### Use Your Debit Card

The internet credit card program will accept debit cards which are branded with the VISA or MasterCard logo and which may be used in the same circumstances as credit cards. Check with your issuing bank to be sure.



( We wish to acknowledge Debbie Constable, Diane Hydovitz, Karen Reddersen and Denise Smith as contributing authors in this issue.

# OPEN SESAME!

Your guide to CM/ECF

USBC District of Maryland March 5, 2003

**Wizard Proclaims: Electronic Filing  
Begins April 21, 2003**



CM/ECF: YOUR KEY TO THE CLERK'S OFFICE



## Upcoming Events

**April 4, 2003**

The court begins converting all existing dockets to our new CM/ECF database and continues throughout the weekend.

**April 7, 2003**

Monday morning, limited court staff will complete last minute testing on the converted data. By noon, all court staff will be docketing in CM/ECF. All pleadings filed from this date forward are available electronically.

**April 8, 2003**

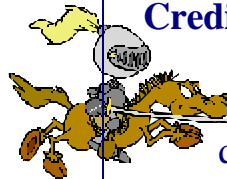
Our pilot group begins filing new cases and all pleadings in both electronic and paper format.

**April 21, 2003**

The door is opened for all users to file electronically.

**[www.mdb.uscourts.gov](http://www.mdb.uscourts.gov)**

( We wish to recognize the work our pilot group has done to help us implement CM/ECF. Thank you!



## Keys to Success

**Training** - Classes are in session now! To register, complete the attorney training registration form on our website.

**Hardware/Software** - The basics include internet access and word processing software that can print or convert to PDF. For more information, see the Systems Requirements on our website.

**PACER Account** - Although you get one free look at newly filed pleadings via the electronic notice when you are a party in the case, you'll need a PACER account to access reports and queries. For information on PACER or to register for an account, visit <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov>.

**Credit Card** - You'll need a credit card to pay filing fees using our internet credit card program, the secure, quick and easy way to pay. For more information, refer to the January 2003 issue of the newsletter, located on our website.

**Support** - The court has a dedicated support team ready to answer your electronic filing questions by telephone or email. Call toll-free **1-866-630-1146** or email: **[ecf@mdb.uscourts.gov](mailto:ecf@mdb.uscourts.gov)**.

Still have questions? For answers to Frequently Asked Questions, please visit us on the web and click on the CM/ECF link.



# OPEN SESAME!

Your guide to CM/ECF

USBC District of Maryland January 30, 2003

## Pilot Group Aces CM/ECF Flight School



### Court Pilots Attorney Training

The court's attorney pilot group started the new year learning how to file electronically. The group included trustees, staff from the Office of the U.S. Trustee and volunteers from the attorney advisory groups. (Pictured below in class with court trainers Shari Hunt and Kevin Kirby: Assistant U.S. Trustee Mark Neal and staff from the Baltimore Office of the U.S. Trustee) During their three hour hands-on training, the "pilots" opened new cases and filed a variety of pleadings.

The pilot group provided the court with valuable feedback on the effectiveness of the training. Here's what some trainees had to say: "Can't wait until it's up and running!" "Very helpful." "Instructors were knowledgeable and eager to help."



### Attorney Training Begins: March

Spring 2003 and live CM/ECF are quickly approaching. To take advantage of all of the benefits of electronic filing, users must receive training. Training classes for attorneys will begin on March 4, 2003, in both the Baltimore and Greenbelt Divisions. Classes will be held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between the hours of 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. If you are already filing electronically in another district, you may waive training and receive your login by completing the training waiver form. The training schedule, training registration form and the training waiver form are all available on the court's website: [www.mdb.uscourts.gov](http://www.mdb.uscourts.gov).

The pilot group will help the court test CM/ECF by electronically filing in our test database the same pleadings they are filing on paper in live cases. This will provide an opportunity to measure the "friendliness" of CM/ECF and help ensure a smooth transition to electronic filing. A big thanks to our pilot group and congratulations to all of our court trainers for a job well done.



## Dear Sourcerer:

**Who is eligible for a login?** Attorneys, trustees and high volume claim filers. Visit our website to register for upcoming training. Attorneys who are filing electronically in other districts may complete a training waiver, also located on our website, to receive a login and password.

**Do trustees need separate logins to file as attorneys?** Yes, your login is considered your signature. The system recognizes the login and gives you specific access. For example, when you login in as a trustee you will be able to file a Trustee's Report of No Assets but you will not be able to file a new case.

**How does the interactive credit card program work?** It allows filers to pay fees as part of the electronic filing process. Simply select the "Pay Now" option on the menu, then enter the credit card account number and expiration date.

The information is encrypted and transmitted by the U.S. Treasury. A corresponding receipt number is returned, displayed and automatically entered on the docket.

If filing multiple documents, choose "Pay Later" and process all the filing fees in one transaction when you are done. If you forget to pay, the program displays the outstanding payment every time you log into CM/ECF. The court will review all outstanding payments daily and will promptly follow up.

**Email questions to:**  
**[marketing@mdb.uscourts.gov](mailto:marketing@mdb.uscourts.gov)**

## Hot Off the Press - Team Updates

**Chambers** - Review and testing of the "E-Orders" program is wrapping up this month with recommendations to the technical team for program modifications.

**Communications** - You'll see information about upcoming attorney training classes on the web, at the February Bankruptcy Bar Association Breakfast and Luncheon, and at the Clerk's Office. Keep an eye out. 👁

**Technical** - The first test submission of noticing data from CM/ECF to the Bankruptcy Noticing Center has been conducted. The team will turn its attention to configuring the credit card program and modifying E-Orders.

**Training** - During its break from training classes, the team is developing an index of attorney, trustee and court events to help users navigate through the CM/ECF menu options.

( We wish to acknowledge Diane Hydovitz, Sandy Frank, Janet Meyers, and Denise Smith as contributing authors in this issue. Will Judge Schneider, Yvette O., Maggie and Karen K-D. please call Diane at x3690 by 2/3/03. Thank you!

**Reminder:** The Clerk's Office is requesting and strongly encouraging customers to file creditor matrices on diskette to familiarize customers with the concept of filing electronic documents, to minimize noticing errors and to increase the efficiency of creditor information input into the court's database. Guidance on filing matrices on diskette is available on the court's website.